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MOVE ON

MARION SELBY PARSONS

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MOVE ON

By
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Preface.

The ever-constant moving force
That builds a monument unto
The highest aim, the grandest thought
Of any age is silent,
For it has no voice—
It cannot warn the innocent—

Move on!

Our monument was built unto
The God of Liberty and Hope,
Within its shadows we must move.
If innocent of better things,
And our great monument must fall,
It will be written of us then:
"They worshiped at the Shrine of Hope;
They labored for humanity;
And, while they worked their god was true,
And filled their hearts with earnest hope."

REQUITAL.

If, by the light to me revealed,
Mine eyes should see some noble deed
By man performed of his free will,
To some misguided wretch in need,
And from my heart there came no wish
To praise the man who did this deed,
Or take him by the hand and say:
"This work shall live another day,"
Then, by the Power that rules the Earth,
My soul will sink to lowest depths,
And nothing come to cause my eyes
To see again such pleasant sights,
And darkness come with me to dwell,
Till from my heart some voice shall say:
"I knew 'twas good, but passed it by;
I've lost the light, O hear my cry!"

* * * * * *

If, by the Light to me revealed,
Mine eyes should see dishonest deeds
By man performed of his free will,
To some misguided wretch in need,
And from my heart there came no wish
To tell the world what I had seen,
And shout a warning to mankind:
"Beware of men who work like this!"
Then all the thieves will 'round me come,
And slimy serpents o'er me crawl,
With fiery eyes and hissing tongue;
Abide with me and all of mine,
Till from the depths of Misery

My soul shall wake to Duty's call,
And with my voice proclaim aloud:
"Such deeds are false—beware of them!"
For well I know that men with light,
Who have been blessed with power to know
The inward wishes of a man,
By what his outward actions show,
Must stand rebuked, or blessed, as may
Their hearts respond to deeds of man.
And for their portion take their pay
In things dealt out as pay to them.

LOVE'S LABOR.

From rankest humus in the soil
  Springs up the sweetest, purest rose.
From sacrifice and honest toil
  The purest, grandest feeling grows.

    Move on!

The New World is but slightly touched,
The Old World has been purified.
The rose that blooms for her must be
Far sweeter than the rose that grows
Among the thistles and the thorns
Untouched by toil, unwatered by
The falling tears of deep regret
Upon decaying Error's plain.
Move on—lest gratitude and trust
Shall turn to hatred and disgust.

MOVE ON!

The all-controlling wish of Man
For happiness and peace on earth
Combined and centered,
Riveted and sure, since Time began.
The eyes, the soul, the heart,
The life of all, fixed and unchangeable,
Growing more and more intense,
Making gods to rule, casting them away,
Then seeking, praying, fighting to death.
Building, wrecking, building again,
And all, that Happiness might come.

Move on!

With shame, the ignorance,
The utter lack of wisdom shown,
Will place this age among the list
For which the Veil of Darkness came
To shield the errors of the past.
When men have learned that happiness
Cannot be found by any man
Among the misery and grief
Abroad and all around,
They will not need another god!

A LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

A League of Nations—let it be,
And let its name be Liberty!
Proclaim this law throughout the earth,
Unto the mothers that give birth
Unto the Lordly, boasting sire
Of sons to lift this banner higher:
You shall not breed another race,
And teach it not to boldly face
The selfish hosts that break the gates
of Hell and overrun the earth
At any time there is a dearth
Of manhood to defend the right.
The Book of Wisdom must contain
A rule of action and sustain
The right of every man to choose,
With penalties and chance to lose,
His life if he should choose to fight
For what his conscience says is right.
And if he will not sure defend
The law on which his hopes depend,
The soul of Liberty is dead,
And all the blood that has been shed
To raise that banner to the sky
Was shed in vain.

* * * * * *

The ignorance there is on earth
Is born again with every birth,
And that great banner, raised on high
To meet the gaze of every eye
That opens to the light of day,

Should bear this sign and boldly say:
"Inherent forces and the laws
That now exist on earth because
Each moment brings another life
To join the never-ending strife
For sustenance and place to move,
Have formed for you a certain groove.
The space is narrow, and the walls
Are high, but you will hear the calls
Of sore distress, and you will long
For liberty, or you will plod
Your narrow way and pray to God
For strength to bear your wretched lot,
Till Misery has been quite forgot.

* * * * * *

Gaze on this picture deep and long,
For you must gather which is wrong
By tasting of the fruits they bear,
As you grow old and bowed with care.
But this remember every day,
As strength and vision fade away,
That all of Life, and all of Death,
Is not the passing of a breath—
That he who feeds the Brute must talk
The language of the Brute and walk
And seek the haunts of Selfishness.
That he who lives a single day
To walk the brightly-lighted way
Of Liberty, and feels the right
To strangle Littleness, and fight
The battles of the weak, will live—
Has lived—and will always give

To frail humanity the strength
To overcome, and will at length
Redeem the world from selfishness
And all its forms of littleness."

* * * * * *

Far in the long-forgotten past
The brand of liberty was cast
Upon the earth, and still it burns
A warning to the man that turns
To any god—to any hope—
That limits Freedom and the scope
In which the mind and thought may soar
Upon the lofty wings that bore
The souls of men who changed the face
Of this old earth, and cleared the space
In which we live till now we boast
The right to name for all the host
Of men who live the rule of right.
Choose now the way that you will go,
And vow to render blow for blow,
For Liberty—to be a man
By all the measures and the plan
That make you free to choose to be
A selfish brute, a pleading tool—
Or neither—just a man, without
The slightest fear or doubt
That you will ever earn a thing
That now or far remote will bring
As recompense a little thing,
Just fit for brutes and begging tools,
For stupid, idle, shallow fools!

MOVE ON!

The heart of man responds in turn
To Fear and Hate, to Love and Hope.
To Fear that, when Tomorrow's sun
Shall set, and all his world grow dark,
He has no place to lay his head.
And, driven out by this strange fear,
He views the rest of all mankind
With jealous eye, and in his soul
He hates the man who has a place
Of safety from the Fear of Want,
And sinks still deeper in despair
Till Love and Hope are gone, and then—
Ah! Who can paint the picture as it is?
The world has waited now for centuries
To welcome him—
To see the picture painted true.
Till every man can feel the guilt
Upon his soul for all the part
He played in any game that placed himself
Beyond the Fear of Want,
And drove his brother to Despair—

Move on!

Perhaps a little farther on
We may be free from Fear, and then
All Hate will disappear, and Love
Will be the Anchor of a Life.

THE WORLD WAR.

December, 1914.

Come, let us go and view the war
That rages on the Other Side,
And, while we view it, cast aside
As worthless trash the sentiment
That sickly souls hold up to view
And loudly cry, "Most horrible!"
For we must know that all things move
In perfect harmony with the Cause,
And cannot stop or turn aside,
Tho' foolish men bring all they have—
Their lives, their wealth, their hopes, and all,
And cast them down as sacrifice
To stop the tide.

Far back upon the winding path
That man has traveled in the maze
Of sad and strange uncertainties,
He thought to raise great monuments,
To build them well, so strong and high,
That Time nor Force could them destroy.
And in this way he builded well,
For evidence, though mute and still,
Stands yet to mock the men who gave
Their lives, their wealth, their hopes, and all,
To mark their greatness ere they fell.
But Time moved on, and races came
That scorned those solid monuments,
And sought to build another way,
Till on the face of this great earth
There came a race that boasted loud:
"Most civilized of all the hosts

That ever lived upon the earth."
And that great race began to build,
Not monuments of wood and stone,
But kingdoms, classes, grades of men.
Most wonderful—
Beyond compare, the mighty work
Achieved by them, as pile on pile
Ascended high the structure grand,
Entwined around and woven in
Like silken cords they placed the threads
Of honest thought, and for the rest
Of that great pile they thought to use
The basest kind of selfishness.
But, as the days gave way to years,
And Time his heavy hand had placed,
Decay began among the fruits
Of selfishness, and from that pile
The echo came as prone it lay
Within the dust:
"There is no rule or law that gives
To any man or nation free
The right to hold without defense
Advantage gained by cunningness
Or otherwise; but, rather, must
The favored one be more exposed
To strong attacks from those whose lives
Are burdened by the mighty load
Of their own share, and that of those
Whose stations are removed and far
From dread of Hunger and Distress."

* * * * * *

Now, as we gaze upon the scene,

And watch them waste themselves away,
Like all great errors of the past
Have done before, we must not lose
Full consciousness.
But we must feel that danger lies
Not only in the wake of shells
That burst and spread the fire of Death,
For in the atmosphere that wraps
This mighty struggle in its folds,
A subtle poison is infused,
That shapes the sentiment of all
Who come within the poison zone.
And if we are to view it well,
We must not fall a victim
Of the false pretense put out to mold
A good defense.
You ask: "What need at all they have
To offer facts or evidence,
To prove the justness of their cause?
Are they not yet the ruling force
Of all the earth?"
'Tis true they occupy the stage.
The closing scene of any act
Is interesting, and always watched
Until the end, and if our thought
Was only this, to watch the show,
We might concede the proven fact:
They do it well, but when 'tis done,
And that deep voice that speaks to worlds
In thunder tones is heard to say:
"Move on, you foolish men of earth!"
Who, then, think you, will take the lead?
Do you suppose that it will be

Some giant great, made fat upon
The Food that made these nations sick?
"But what of peace? Will it not come
To save the day?"
Most fatal poison of them all,
For we are lulled to sleep by it,
And sleeping, dream the strangest dreams
Suggested by the hope, the wish—
A hope that brands us baser still
Than all the hosts that Time has placed
Behind the screen of darkest past.
For Love and Peace dwell not with us,
Who dream this dream.
Our souls are filled with mortal fear
Lest, when another day shall come,
We have no place to lay our heads;
And, driven out by that strange fear,
We battle, fight, destroy, and kill,
And trample down the weaker ones
Till, standing free from fear of want,
We raise our voice and cry for peace.
Ah! Fatal dream that comes to us
Who drink this poison cup of hope,
And sleep the sleep of righteous peace.
Do you believe that peace like this
Is born of Love, and can abide
The test of Time? You answer, "No."
Then why debate—is it not clear
That 'twixt this day and that good time
When lasting peace will come to earth,
There lies a thousand years or more?
Why seek to stop by cunningness
The mighty movement of the world

Toward a final peace on earth?
"Disarm!" you say. Why think of this?
Is fighting o'er? Must every man
Be now content to bear 'till death
The lot he has?
'Tis safer far to arm the sons
Of this great age, and bid them fight.
For never since the dawn of Time
Began to light the minds of men
With power to judge of right and wrong,
Has there appeared a race so fit
To battle for a lasting peace.
To count it all most terrible,
And measure every moan that comes
From lips that speak no more in words,
Seems fitting when we stand within
The very shadow of it all.

* * * * * *

But who will try to count the lives
That will be lost betwixt this time
And that great day when peace will come,
If kings and potentates are called
Upon to fix the day that they
Will share their fortunes with the serf?
The atmosphere! Beware of it:
'Tis like the hour that does precede
The dawn of day, the darkest hour
Of all the night, and, while it last,
Full many a phantom will appear.
The mighty men of all the earth
Will scatter crumbs among the poor.
The Kings will cry: "The Fatherland!

To arms, you faithful sons of this
Thy fathers' land before you lived!"
And many gods will be invoked
By worshipers to intervene.
And each strange phantom will remain
To curse the time that it appeared,
Until destroyed by War and Death.
And yet, think you, that all the men
That ever lived, or yet shall come
To live upon this great, old earth
Are doomed to death and base decay?
Canst only this, thy anxious mind
Encompass well? Doth nothing say
In even faintest whispers low,
That man must rise to put behind
Each fatal thing that speaks of death,
'Till on him bursts the shining light,
To make it plain the only way
That man can go and live in peace?

LIFE.

He thought to crush the reed of life,
To use the sap when life was old,
Only to find the reed destroyed,
And sap and all turned into mould.

THE PURSE OF GOLD.

Bring out the golden harp and play
That ever-tuneful sounding lay,
Of Man's undying faith and trust
In Wealth and Power, Pride and Lust.
Louder! Ye sons of Mother Earth!
It seems to me there is a dearth
Of music in your tune today.
Do you not hear that splendid lay
By yon poor player on the way?
You cannot play so grand a tune—
Has all your power gone so soon?
It seems to me but yesterday
I heard a million voices say:
"On golden wings we sail along,
And sing the grandest, sweetest song."
And all the world bowed down to gold.
Now, by the powers I am told,
That poverty and greatest need
Must scatter truth, and still the more
Just when my heart is sick and sore,
And dreadful storms around me break—
I plead with you, for mercy's sake,
To calm the storm and ease the pain.
Your answer is: "That splendid strain
Cannot be played on golden strings.
It is the tune that Virtue brings."
Here! Take these millions, if you may,
And in my name, approaching say
To yon poor player: "Ah, behold!
My master sends a purse of gold."

THE MUSE.

Ah, transient Muse, how swift you are,
Leaping from Earth unto a Star,
Never content to stay awhile
To let me catch your sweetest smile,
Or hold you here on Earth to show
How wonderful it is to know
This strange, old Earth, and all her whims,
And write it down in prose and hymns,
For mortal man to read and sing,
Till on your light and lofty wing
He, too, may raise above the things
That bow his head, which slowly brings
An end to all his hopes at last,
When life's long, stormy days are passed.

DECEPTION.

There is no man so dense as he
  Who to himself no fault applies.
There is no man so base as he
  Who covers faults with baser lies.

    Move on!

The false pretense you practise now,
The lies you tell with confidence,
Are open books that children read
And understand, and form parades
To mock you at your little work.

SHADOWS.

There is beauty, light, and gladness,
There is tensity and madness,
There is sorrow, grief, and sadness
In the faces that I see.
And I drink the cup of sorrow,
Feel the madness in my morrow,
And of gladness seem to borrow
As the faces stare at me.

PRETENSE.

When each grade of life assembled
Into organized existence,
Out of a chaos of matter
Before the beginning of man,
And each grade had assumed its place
In order of its importance
To the whole, completing the world
Of moving, material things,
Nothing was left, and nothing changed.
But Time had begun and the world
Was complete—not an error there!
And over the face of its broad expanse
It moved in perfect harmony,
Until a Stranger came to live upon the earth,
And there proclaimed a Law,
Separate and distinct
From all the Laws that ruled the earth.
From whence this Stranger came
I have my views, which matters not.
But there was found no place for Him.

And since that day his work has been
To find a place where He might live
In harmony and peace within,
Among the elements of earth.
Move on!
You poor, benighted man,
Your last attempt at happiness
That seeks to turn the world aside,
And punish all the earth that you
May live in peace is foolishness.
If wisdom you possess, and you
Should now begin to see the way,
You will forget the false pretense
That you have always owned the earth.

LIFE IN DEATH.

If all the social planes were fixed,
And all the economic life moved 'round
In cycles like the sun,
And in a period of time found endings
Where they first begun,
There still would be no cause to weep—
Move on!
For, in your mind there is a thought,
And in your soul there is a wish
To climb—to soar above the sphere
You occupy, and this is proof,
And positive that, somewhere
In the sphere of life not after death,
There is a broader, higher plane.

DESPAIR.

The mighty avalanche that pours
Its flood of grief and woe
Upon a world of ignorance
Is but the ponderous weight of Error,
Set in motion by the law of Recompense,
To which we all subscribe and

Swear allegiance.

And when the time arrives to take
Our place upon the battlefield of life,
Our armor is the thought
That we shall earn as recompense
For all the labor of our days
A quiet place of honor 'mong
The heroes we have met and fought.

Move on!

It was a dream you had.
Your quiet place is all beset by misery,
And you must hear the wail of grief
From some poor soul,
Whose life is all but trampled out.
And ghosts of errors you have made
Invade your quiet domicile,
And scream at you till you awake,
And then, behold, far in advance
Of that small world you occupied
A host of men with banners bright,
On which you read:
"Death to the rule of Might!
Long live Humanity!"
And, as your soul sinks deeper in Despair,

When your frail limbs refuse to carry
You into the fight,
The light of truth appears and
You can understand the ignorance
That leads you out into a field,
A barren waste, to spend your strength
In search of happiness, and you
Will be amazed to find that while
You dreamed the world did not.

THE OLD AND THE NEW.

The Old gives up to the New today,
Tomorrow the New Is Old.
And the tears that are shed
For the Old that is dead
Gave life to the New
On the day it is wed
To the World, in its glad array.

Only the souls that cling to the Old
Are barred from the wedding feast.
For they mourn all the day,
As they earnestly pray
For the world to stop,
And cease to be gay,
While they gather their crop of mould.

THE SOLDIER.

Save your praise for the man who weaves,
And must change his wares for gold—
I fought that liberty might be yours,
And my wares must not be sold.
Barter you may with all the things
That I bought you with my blood,
But do not measure my motive pure
By a service sign or a word.
You may play at politics and later print
A picture of all that you do,
But when you shall think to cheapen me,
That the price may come to you,
It is more than the common fool should dare,
It is baser than the meanest lies,
And the price is far too much to pay,
For the poor little thing it buys.

MOVE ON!

The seed of life immortal came
From seething furnaces of grief;
From leaping, roaring sheets of flame
That melted pride and unbelief.
That left untouched the law of right,
That humbled loudly boasted Might.

High on the altar that it raised
There will be placed the ashes of
The last remains of many boasts
And costly armor built to save

Unholy forms from perishing—

Move on!

Select the sacrifice that you
Will offer up, tho' all untouched
By that great fire that purified
The first decaying remnant of
A mighty host across the sea,
That you may also find a place
Among the purified by grief,
And prove your right to live
Without the torch!

THE LONG ROAD.

It seems like a living thing,
This Phantom clothed in spotless white,
That comes to us in dreams by night,
And seeks to lead us on to right
And peaceful living here on earth—

Move on!

The animal in man will breed
A billion sons for slaughter
Ere we see the light.
Our dreams have ended at the place
Where we must change our raiment for
This spotless robe of purest white,
And, as we waken at the thought,
We murmur and accuse and boast,
And prove our littleness again.

DARKNESS.

Ever, still ever, the moments are passing,
Drifting away to the great Sea of Time,
That lies in the past of a world that is moving
Ever and onward to things more sublime.

Why mourn for the hours we have spent in error,
Crowning the Kings of a Frenzied Finance?
The wisdom of old, and the times of terror,
Flirted alike with the fortunes of chance.

They lost, and the shades of eternal blackness
Have gathered them all to their cold embrace.
To have and to hold, for the Shades of Darkness
Were made for a veil to cover their space.

We lost, for the Phantom we chased has perished
Like values of old, it has faded away,
And left us to mourn for a hope once cherished,
That bloomed for a while, then sank to decay.

Shall it, then, be written on History's pages:
"They worshipped a god so base and so low,
Tho' boasting the wisdom of saints and of sages,
One error, its punishment, laid them all low?"

Or, shall we arise in Phœnix-like fashion,
Up out of the dust of Error's decay,
To carry the Flag of our glorious Nation
Higher, still higher, and plant it to stay?

CONCLUSION.

When war is o'er, and the world
Shall rest in peace, and every man
Can feel that he is safe from harm
That rises out of selfishness,
The sword will be a useless tool.
Till then, and 'haps the way is long,
Each step toward that day will be
Through fire and war, and misery
From ignorance, the lash that drives.
Move on!
The wisdom you pretend, and do possess,
Uncrystallized, might save you
Many a futile step, if, in the days
That try your soul, you could forget
A measure of that selfishness—
At least that part that leads you
To forget the rights and happiness
Of those around.
You know how sure it is that men
Will fight and nations war when they
Have reach'd the time their interests clash.
That blood will flow until defeat
Has come to one, that death will be
The price of every step you take,
Because you will not understand.

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